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# Georgia Southern University Athletics



Lifetime Giving to Now Be Recognized Through Giving Societies

New initiative adds another avenue from a fundraising standpoint

Athletic Foundation

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[GIVING SOCIETIES](#)

**STATESBORO, Ga.** - The Georgia Southern Athletic Foundation today announced a brand new way to thank Eagle supporters with four giving societies. The Oak Circle, Beautiful Eagle Creek Society, Talon Society and the revamped Champion Society will now recognize lifetime giving milestones.

Since [Jared Benko](#) began leadership as the director of athletics, he has had an emphasis on the members of Eagle Nation and making sure each supporter feels appreciated.

"We are very excited about this new initiative because we have never recognized lifetime giving," Benko said. "In the past, we have placed a considerable amount of focus on the annual fund, which is giving tied to tickets. To further accelerate our growth, we are excited about this new way to both recognize and encourage philanthropic giving. These new giving societies will afford us the ability to put our best foot forward from a fundraising standpoint."

Until now, the Athletic Foundation has focused only on current year contributions when thanking donors. The Erk Russell Fund is an annual donation, being recognized accordingly, and there has never been a supplement for those who gave outside of the Erk Russell Fund or did not make a gift in a current year. The previous iteration of the Champion Society was the same way; donors were only part of the Champion Society for the years in which they made a gift. The new method of these giving societies is to grant lifetime membership – once a donor is recognized in a society, they are there for life, even if they cannot make a gift in the future.

"Jared has made our supporters a priority and this follows that lead," said [Erick Reasoner](#), Executive Director of the Athletic Foundation. "We want to thank people who have given to our program and make a way for longevity to be recognized. Donors who have supported the program will be recognized as they never have before. [Frank Hook](#) is a great example; he has given his life to this program and his monetary contributions have never been recognized because they did not fit certain criteria. Now he is a Champion Society member."

Reasoner is referring to the significant change of rewarding a lifetime of giving. The entry society is the Champion Society, recognizing those who have given at least \$50,000 with no more than \$25,000 of the total being from Erk Russell Fund donations.

"Many of our donors have given for tickets over the years while also giving some to facilities or specific sports and it adds up over time," Reasoner said. "Over 100 donors are now recognized in the Champion Society, compared to less than 50 in the old methodology."

The Athletic Foundation has plans for other announcements in the coming months as they continually strive to enhance the lives of our student-athletes and create a premium experience for Eagle supporters.

If you are interested to learn more about these giving societies, [click here](#) to see the PDF explaining the program and answering FAQs. If you would like to know where you stand in regards to the giving societies, please contact [Ben Rodriguez](#) at 912.601.7892 or [BenRodriguez@GeorgiaSouthern.edu](mailto:BenRodriguez@GeorgiaSouthern.edu).  
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